The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

WHOLE NO. 1579 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JULY 15, 1941 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 31, NO. 28

FACING the FACTS
With PHILIP PEARL

The House of Representatives administered an extremely wholesome, if bitter, pill to the enemies of labor when it overwhelmingly eliminated the anti-labor provisions of the May Bill.

This was a test vote. The reactionary group in Congress had maneuvered for months in an attempt to find a favorable opportunity to strike a blow at the labor movement. They kept up a running fire of accusations against labor leaders and jumped upon every strike as a pretext for smearing labor unions. Ignoring the truth, they charged labor with failing to cooperate with the defense program. Ignoring the huge profits reaped by corporations, they attacked labor mercilessly for seeking wage increases. Ignoring the fact that the great majority of the men drafted for service in the armed forces are union members or the sons or brothers of union members, they even tried the low dodge of contrasting the $21 monthly pay of soldiers with union wages.

Having laid down this barrage, the Tory bloc tried one feint after another to get the vicious Vinson Bill considered but were blocked at every turn and forced to sidetrack the measure. Finally, they rallied all their forces behind the May Bill in an all-out effort to smash organized labor.

Bill Threatened Democracy

Consider for a moment the duplicity of this bill. Its avowed purpose—in fact, its only legitimate purpose—was to reduce the draft age limit to twenty-eight years. With this provision the American Federation of Labor had no quarrel. But somehow, while the measure was being considered by the House Military Affairs Committee, a whole flock of new provisions were inserted in the bill and every one of them was directed against the workers.

If the bill had been adopted as reported by the committee strikes would have been virtually outlawed and compulsory labor would have been as much a fact in this country as in Nazi Germany. And this in the name of national defense!

But the American Federation of Labor promptly and effectively exposed the fraud. President William Green sent a letter to each member of Congress carefully analyzing the dangerous nature of the bill's provisions and presenting them in their true light. Legislative representatives of the American Federation of Labor canvassed the members of the House and quietly but effectively pointed out to them why this bill threatened the future of democracy in America.

The results were apparent in the vote. It was almost a matter of course that the liberal Congressmen and those whose loyalty to organized labor was unquestioned would line up solidly against the objectionable sections of the May Bill. But the vote disclosed that even a large number of conservative Congressmen turned thumbs on it, too. It was too raw a deal for them to approve.

A. F. of L. Did the Real Job

But the future results of the stinging defeat suffered by labor's enemies will be even more constructive. The Tories will think twice now before launching any more vicious onslaughts against labor. Anyone who gets kicked in the teeth once doesn't relish going through the same experience again.

And labor probably will not soon be harrassed by another blitzkrieg of destructive legislation. It's no fun for a Congressman to bump his head against a stone wall. When he introduces a piece of legislation, he expects at least a fighting chance of getting it adopted—that is unless he has sold out entirely to special interests and is engaging merely in propaganda. But the House of Representatives has now served notice by thumping majorities that it will have no truck with anti-labor legislation and that, we guess, will discourage even the most optimistic labor-haters.

Of course, the CIO sought to claim credit for this significant legislative victory but they could scarcely do that with a straight face. It was the undisciplined and unpatriotic conduct of Communist-dominated CIO unions which provoked the legislative threats to labor in the first place. And, in the second place, their high-pressure lobbying methods almost upset the applecart. No self-respecting member of Congress will take orders from any organization under threats but the great majority of Congressmen are willing to listen to reason. The CIO effort to club Congressmen into line almost proved a boomerang. The American Federation of Labor did the real job and the workers of the nation will reap the benefits.

Bates Urges Congress To Provide 600 Millions For Defense Housing

Washington, D. C.—Chairman Harry C. Bates of the American Federation of Labor's Housing Committee urged Congress to double the proposed 300 million-dollar new appropriation for defense housing.

The dire need of additional homes for defense workers makes a public housing program of 150,000 units an irreducible minimum, Mr. Bates told the House Committee on Public Buildings which is considering H. R. 5211. The appropriations authorized by this bill for defense housing must be increased to 600 million dollars if the program is to be effective, Mr. Bates insisted.

The national defense program may be crippled unless new housing is speedily provided for workers engaged on defense projects, Mr. Bates explained.

"It is important to realize," he said, "that defense housing is no less important than an adequate supply of aluminum, of electric power, of machinery and tools.

"Defense production requires of each worker every day and every hour of his employment full contribution of his strength, his energy, his dexterity, and his skill.

"When a man works a full shift with overtime on shipbuilding or aircraft assembly, or tank plate welding, or on gun barrel machining, he puts into his job all he has got. When he comes home after a full day of defense work, he is licked. His strength is wrung out of him, his brain is tired, his nerves are shot. And yet, when he is back on the shift the next day he has to be in top-notch form once again. His work may call for exactness and precision but, above all, it calls for speed. To do well this rush work under pressure, he must be refreshed and alert.

"That is why each defense worker must be provided with a home in which there is enough space for his rest and leisure. These he cannot get where there are two families doubled up in one home, where there is not enough space, no privacy, no adequate ventilation, not even the least requisites for healthful, comfortable living.

"The Housing Committee of the American Federation of Labor is in close and direct touch, thrugh its nationwide network of local housing committees, with the housing needs in each and every community in which defense production is concentrated. Our thorough canvass of the situation has brought to us forcefully the urgency of the defense housing need. In one community after another we find that a critical situation exists. There is increasing over-crowding and doubling-up of defense workers' families and in many communities no housing at all to shelter the incoming workers brought into the defense employment."

Central Labor Unions Urged To Aid Postal Workers Get Pay Raise

The Flannery Longevity Pay Bill, H. R. 1057, has been reported out by the House Post Office Committee. This measure provides that postal workers who have served continuously for 10 years will receive a pay increase of $100 a year, and those who have served 15 years will receive an increase of $200. The last wage raise which the postal employee received was in February, 1925—over 15 years ago.

President William Green, of the American Federation of Labor, in a letter on June 12, 1941, to Congressman Milton A. Romjue, Chairman of the House Post Office Committee, said:

"The American Federation of Labor, having a membership comprised of more than 5,000,000 workers throughout the United States, has repeatedly adopted resolutions favoring the establishment of this principle for postal employes. At no time has the justness of the legislation been challenged, but serious economic conditions of the past have, from time to time, retarded its progress. These conditions have passed, and we now find ourselves in the midst of a national emergency when millions of dollars are being appropriated and expended for national defense. The ultimate result of this will be an appreciable increase in taxes; a noticeable rise in commodity prices, and inflation which are in part at least being taken care of by outside industry by increased wages. It isn't difficult to visualize a serious impairment of this branch of the government service, so vital to the national defense program, unless the needs of these employes are likewise given consideration."

All central labor unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor are requested to respond to the needs of the postal employes by wiring or writing to their Congressmen urging the prompt enactment of this legislation.

Pay Envelope Parade Marches On! Two Unions Report Record Boosts

Machinists Win $20,000,000 Pay Increases and Gain Members

Washington, D. C.—Wage increases of nearly $20,000,000 a year have been negotiated by lodges of the International Association of Machinists for over 100,000 workers so far this year, President Harvey W. Brown revealed.

These gains establish an all-time record for a six-month period, Brown declared. In all parts of the country, he said, hundreds of new employers are being brought under the union banner and smashing wage boosts are being won. Membership, he added, is growing by leaps and bounds.

Among the wage gains announced at Machinists' headquarters were: Eighty-two garages in Tacoma, 12½ cents an hour; 13 machine shops in St. Paul, 10 cents; 12 job and machine shops in Chicago, 10 cents; 11 machine shops in Sacramento, Calif., 15 cents. Wage advances at many individual companies ran as high as 30 cents hourly.

Impressive progress was also made in the aircraft field. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were added to payrolls in Machinists' pacts negotiated with the Beech Aircraft Corporation, Wichita, Kans.; McDonald Aircraft Company, Robertson, Mo., and Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, San Diego, Calif.

Another big firm—the Hamilton Propeller Division of the United Aircraft Corporation in East Hartford, Conn.—was won by the Machinists in a National Labor Relations Board election, 2,046 to 870.

Electricians Secure $4,200,000 Wage Increases and Paid Vacations

Washington, D. C.—Tremendous strides have been made by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers during the first six months of this year, President Ed J. Brown revealed.

His half-year roundup showed wage increases averaging 7 cents an hour were won for 30,000 of the Brotherhood's members. On an annual basis, these gains would exceed $4,200,000. Every week pay boosts are being obtained for thousands of additional members, Brown declared.

The average wage scale of the Brotherhood's members—now far over the 200,000 mark—has been brought up to an all-time high of $1.38 an hour. In some metropolitan centers, electricians are earning from $1.50 to $2 an hour.

Among other remarkable advances has been the winning of vacations with pay for over 100,000 members, Brown reported. The Brotherhood has also paid out huge sums in benefits in the past year, including over $530,000 in old age pensions and $619,000 in death benefits.

"We feel we've done pretty well," Brown said. "But, of course, we're not resting on our oars. We're going right ahead to improve the conditions of our members every day, without a halt."

Green Greets British Labor Head And Pledges Aid In Two-Way Talk

Washington, D. C.—American workers are determined to aid and assist the workers of Great Britain "in every possible way," President William Green of the American Federation of Labor told Chairman George Gibson of the British Trades Union Congress in a two-way trans-Atlantic talk broadcast over a NBC nation-wide hookup.

The broadcast officially inaugrated "Aid British Labor Week," which has been proclaimed by the Governors of twenty-two States and will be observed this week by practically all American labor organizations under the leadership of the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor.

Mr. Green explained that the purpose of this campaign is to raise funds for the relief of British workers victimized by Hitler's blitzkrieg. The money will be used to send food, clothing, mobile kitchens, medicine, bandages and other necessary supplies to Great Britain for the relief of those workers who are suffering for want of them.

In response to a question from Mr. Gibson as to whether American workers understand the need for utmost aid to Britain, Mr. Green declared:

"American workers have fully demonstrated not only their understanding of the need for aiding Britain but they have exerted their own efforts to make that aid effective. Cooperating with the Government on a broad scale unparalleled even in the last war, the men and women of the American Federation of Labor have made possible a record-breaking increase in the production of the materials of war. A vast construction program of military cantonments and industrial buildings has been carried through without a serious hitch. Whole fleets of airplanes are being wheeled off the assembly lines each month, while expansion of production is being stepped up daily. Guns, tanks, explosives and munitions of all kinds are now at production heights. This program has involved many sacrifices by labor, but I am proud to say that none of labor's democratic rights or social gains has been impaired."

Mr. Gibson then asked whether the Nazi attack on Russia has confused the minds of Americans and made them think that aid to Britain is less necessary. Mr. Green replied:

"On the contrary, we in America feel that Hitler's invasion of Russia affords us and Great Britain a great opportunity to strengthen our defenses while the Nazi armed forces are being weakened on another front. We regard the present situation as a welcome breathing spell during which we can catch up with Nazi war production and even exceed it. We realize that if Hitler succeeds in conquering Russia in short order, he will have greater supplies and resources to support his drive for world domination. Therefore, instead of relaxing, we are pressing for even greater speed in our national defense program."

The broadcast concluded with the following statement from Mr. Green:

"From their very hearts and souls, the workers of America extend to you in Great Britain fervent wishes for success in your battle against the common enemy of mankind."

Baltimore City Employes Get Raises And Better Conditions In New Pact

Baltimore, Md.—Day workers of this municipality gained pay raises of twenty-five per cent over rates of last fall when the Board of Estimates approved a working-wage agreement between the city and an AFL union.

Two wage increases specified in the agreement—one retroactive to July 1, the second effective next January 1, along with pay boosts granted in effecting settlements of the series of strikes last fall and this winter—add up to a one-fourth boost in pay for some 8,600 per diem workers now employed by the Department of Public Works.

Laborers received 45 cents an hour in 1940. The rate to June 30 was 50 cents. Under the agreement, it is now 52 cents an hour, and rises to 56 cents an hour beginning January 1.

Other classes of workers are to receive corresponding increases for the remainder of the year and further boosts in 1942.

The agreement recognizes the workers' right to bargain collectively and grants, besides the wage increases, broad concessions in improved working conditions.

The improved working conditions include rotation of workers on Sunday shifts, strict observance of seniority in hiring, firing and furloughing and specified length of vacations with pay.

Pennsylvania Minimum Wage Law Upheld by Court In Key Decision

HARRISBURG, Pa.—The right of the Commonwealth to set minimum wage standards for women and other decision by the Dauphin County Court.

The minimum wage law, passed in 1937, was considered so important by the State that Attorney General Claude T. Reno personally argued the case.

In declaring the 1937 law constitutional, Judge John E. Fox dismissed an appeal from an order by Lewis G. Hines, Secretary of Labor and Industry, in fixing a minimum wage of 27 cents an hour for women and minors employed in the laundry industry.

Judge Fox's decision was hailed as a "great victory for the Commonwealth" by Reno.

"This law," the Attorney General asserted, "is vitally important to the women and minors employed in industry."

Hines also praised the Fox opinion and hinted that he may act in the near future to set wage requirements for the hotel and restaurant industry.

The 1937 law was challenged by 58 Central Pennsylvania laundries.

I.B.E.W. LOCAL SWEEPS SIMPLEX WIRE ELECTION

Cambridge, Mass.—The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers won a sweeping victory in a National Labor Relations Board election held among employes of the Simplex Wire Company.

The vote was 620 for the I.B.E.W to 347 for an independent union.

News Briefs

WORKERS ASKED TO FILE FOR R. R. RETIREMENT

Washington, D. C.—The Railroad Retirement Board asked all persons with railroad service prior to 1937 to file statements immediately with the board or their last railroad employer to establish eligibility for retirement payments when they reach retirement age. The board estimated that 230,000 out of 1,200,000 individuals entitled to credit for service before 1937 have not yet submitted statements of service.

By submitting these statements now, Murray W. Latimer, chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board, emphasized, railroad workers can get the full annuity amounts to which they are entitled, with a minimum of delay, when they reach retirement age. They will also guard against destruction or loss of records proving their service.

An individual may count railroad service before 1937 toward his annuity if on August 29, 1935, he was working for an employer subject to the act or was on furlough, leave of absence, or was absent on account of sickness or disability in accordance with an applicable rule or practice in effect on the employer. Employers covered by the act include interstate railroads, companies owned or controlled by such railroads which perform services in connection with rail transportation, sleeping-car and express companies, railroad associations, and the standard railway labor organizations.

NASHVILLE UNIONS GET NEW CONTRACTS

Nashville, Tenn.—One of the best union agreements ever obtained in the South was signed here between the Tennessee Biscuit Company and the Bakery Workers Union and the Teamsters and Chauffeurs Union. The agreements call for the closed shop, increased wages, vacations with pay and holidays with pay. Seniority is another feature of the agreements, with generally improved working conditions.

This is the first closed shop agreement signed by this company, and the membership, highly elated, has expressed determination to prove to management that it is good business for employers to sign closed shop agreements with union labor. Curtis Sims, international representative of the Bakery Workers, assisted the local membership in the negotiations.

LONG HOURS CONDEMNED BY COMMISSIONER MILLER

Albany, N. Y.—Frieda S. Miller, State Industrial Commissioner, held that increasing the work week or otherwise reducing labor standards would reduce rather than increase efficiency. "Tired or hungry workers produce few guns and little butter," she told Governor Lehman in her annual report. "Sub-standard wages don't make enthusiastic workers or citizens." Long hours, she added, increase accidents, spoiled work, and the amount of time lost through illness.

HARVEY NAMED HEAD OF RAILWAY MAIL ASS'N

Washington, D. C.—Changes in the official family of the A. F. of L. Railway Mail Association were announced.

Chester M. Harvey of St. Paul, who had been vice president for the past five years, was elected to the presidency. He succeeds J. F. Bennett, who retired after being with the union as vice president and president for the past 20 years.

John L. Reilly, Chicago, president of the association's Ninth Division, was elected to the vice presidential vacancy left by Harvey. John J. Kennedy was re-elected secretary-treasurer and H. W. Strickland was renamed executive secretary and editor of the union's journal for the fourteenth consecutive two-year term.

HATTERS UNION WINS FIGHT AGAINST DISEASE

Danbury, Conn.—The long fight of Local 10, United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers, for the outlawing of mercury in the hat industry ended in victory when the State Health Department announced use of mercurial compounds will be prohibited in Connecticut After Dec. 1.

This will eliminate the dreaded occupational disease, "hatter's shakes," which has taken a serious toll of workers in Danbury and Norwalk hat shops.

UTILITY RAISES WAGES DURING NEGOTIATIONS

Philadelphia, Pa.—A five-cents-an-hour wage increase to the 5000 bus drivers of the Public Service Transportation Company of New Jersey was announced.

The increase from the present 70-cents-an-hour maximum came in the midst of negotiations between the utility and the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employee of America, A. F. L.

John S. Tuttle, chairman of the union negotiating committee, said the raise was voluntary on the part of the company.

May Bill Snowed Under In House; Vote Dooms All Anti-Labor Moves

Defeat of Repressive Legislation Shows Labor's Friends Still In Saddle

Washington, D. C.—Labor's enemies sustained their most shattering defeat of the year when the House of Representatives killed by overwhelming majorities every vicious section of the May Bill aimed at the democratic rights of American workers.

This resounding victory for labor wiped out all fears of further frontal attacks by the small but vociferous reactionary group of Congressmen who, with the aid of anti-labor newspapers, have attempted time and again during this session of Congress to impose totalitarian conditions on trade unions. Each attack of this kind has been successfully repulsed.

President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, who urged each member of Congress to vote against the May Bill, interpreted its defeat as the death-knell to all pending and any future anti-labor proposals.

"There should no longer be any doubt as to what fate lies in store for any repressive legislation directed against labor," Mr. Green said.

"The time has come when, instead of dividing public support of the national defense program by destructive legislation of this kind, all groups should unite for the achievement of the common goal—which is to make America invulnerable to attack.

"The trouble is that some people are trying to take advantage of the national defense program to destroy labor's gains. Instead of recognizing and appreciating the tremendous aid given by organized labor to national defense, these enemies of the workers seize upon every pretext to villify and condemn the trade union movement. The House of Representatives has now given them a stinging and convincing answer."

The only section of the May Bill which was adopted was the provision reducing the draft age limit to twenty-eight years. This section was supported by the American Federation of Labor.

Other sections of the bill, which would have virtually outlawed the right to strike and would have resulted in complusory labor, were voted down by three-to-one majorities.

The measure now goes to conference where undesirable sections of the Senate version of the bill are expected to be eliminated.

Seldom has the debate over legislation in the House been more tempestuous than that over the obnoxious features of the May Bill. The fight against them was led by Rep. Arthur D. Healey, of Massachusetts, who was ably assisted by scores of labor's friends in the lower House. Even many conservative Congressmen, shocked by the anti-democratic conditions that the bill sought to impose, voted against it.

Angry protests were voiced in the House against high-pressure methods used by the CIO in campaigning against the bill but no criticism was leveled against the American Federation of Labor. The CIO, as usual, tried to claim credit for defeating the bill but, in fact, they did more to embarrass labor's cause than to help it.

RECORD PLANE OUTPUT ACHIEVED IN JUNE

Washington, D. C.—More military airplanes were delivered by American manufacturers in June than in any previous month in history. The total of 1,476 was 142 above the figure for May, the Office of Production Management announced.

This sets at rest charges of labor haters that strikes had played havoc with the industry and were hampering the defense program. As a matter of fact, O. P. M. officials revealed, planes are being produced for Britain under the lease-lend program in larger number than pilots can be trained to fly them.

KNOX LAUDS LABOR IN SHIPBUILDING

Says Navy Construction Program Is Year Ahead of Schedule

Washington, D. C.—Praising the morale of shipbuilding workers, Secretary of the Navy Knox disclosed that ship construction in the defense program is a year ahead of schedule.

Reviewing his first year as head of the Navy Department, Secretary Knox declared that labor is now building destroyers in ten months whereas before the defense program started it used to take almost two years to complete such a job. He added:

"I have never seen a higher morale among shipbuilding workers. Construction is going at top speed in every yard in the Atlantic, Pacific and the Gulf.

"They are away ahead of schedule—about a year ahead."

Most of the shipyards throughout the country are now working under regional stabilization pacts with the unions involved at rates of pay higher than ever paid heretofore. Strikes and lockouts are forbidden under these voluntary pacts.

Roosevelt Urges Full Support of "Aid British Labor Week"

New York, N. Y.—President Roosevelt urged "the wholehearted and enthusiastic support of Americans" for "Aid British Labor Week" in a letter to Matthew Woll, chairman of the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor. His letter follows:

Dear Mr. Woll:

The coming Aid British Labor Week, which is being sponsored by the American Labor Committee to Aid British Labor, deserves to have, and, I am sure will have, the wholehearted and enthusiastic support of Americans. It is fitting and proper that such a movement should be initiated by labor and it is natural that all groups should follow this leadership in making the highly commendable effort a success.

British workers are laboring ceaselessly and tirelessly for the cause of democracy which is theirs and which they are determined not to surrender no matter what the sacrifices. In their supreme effort they deserve to have and they will have the wholehearted support of American workers who will see to it that there is full and uninterrupted production of the weapons and materials needed by their fellows engaged in fighting the good fight for democracies.

Every day our workers show their willingness and eagerness to serve this nation fully in the demands being made upon us to aid those whose way of life is our way of life. In this they share the determination of all those who are now united and working in the cause of democracy so that liberty and the priceless heritage shall not be lost.

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

Finnish Trade Unions Support War Against Russia Despite Nazi Allies

Washington, D. C.—The Finnish trade unions are supporting their government in the war against Soviet Russia despite the fact that their country is allied with Nazi Germany in this struggle.

This information was conveyed to President William Green of the American Federation of Labor in a cablegram from Eero A. Vuori, chairman of the Finnish Trade Union Center. The cablegram follows:

"The fight of the Finnish people under circumstances which, as a peace-loving nation they were anxious to avoid, is now as in the 1939-1940 struggle against imperialism of Soviet Union. It is also a fight against the Bolshevik policy aiming at bringing our country into slavery under foreign dictatorship.

"Thus the reasons for our struggle are the same as in 1939-1940 when Finland had to fight alone for her independence. At that time we received great sympathy from your powerful organization. We sincerely hope you fully understand our struggle being a fight for Finland's independence and for conditions allowing a free trade union movement. Therefore, this fight is supported by our organization and members."

Mr. Green made public the cablegram without comment.

LABOR CONTRIBUTES TO N. Y. WELFARE FUND

New York, N. Y.—Sixty thousand dollars has been contributed by international labor groups with headquarters in New York to the $4,000,000 raised to date in the current drive of the Greater New York Fund, it was reported to James A. Farley, campaign chairman. Other union groups have contributed an additional $30,000.

Several unions have contributed for the first time, among them being the Federal Labor Unions of the A. F. of L., the Laundry Workers Joint Board, the Railroad Brotherhoods, the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians of America and the United Shoe Workers Union.